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AUTHOR Blendinger, Jack; Snipes, Gail
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ABSTRACT

This paper offers an instrument for using structured observation to study the managerial behavior of high school principals. The instrument organizes observations into several strands, which can be used to "shadow" a principal. The strands are: (A) basic administrative functions; (B) office-related tasks; (C) managing by walking about; (D) scheduled and unscheduled meetings and conferences; and (E) interactions and interruptions. Strand A addresses essential functions, such as student discipline, that a principal is expected to perform on the job. Strands B-D address time recorded for strand A functions from different perspectives, such as how much time the principal spends managing by walking about. Strand E uses frequency tallies rather than time as a measure to address interactions and interruptions. The instrument was developed to assist researchers and graduate students involved in action research projects to use structured observation in studying the managerial behavior of high school principals. It provides the observer with specific behaviors that should be taken into account while making observations. It requires the observer to be in the school setting at a specified time for a prescribed length of time. A running account of behaviors as they occur is then recorded, using a coding system, noting time and/or frequency occurrences. Data collection is not dependent on the observer being highly experienced, information is recorded in relation to behaviors expected to occur, and the instrument collects both quantitative and qualitative data. (Contains 19 references.) (DFR)

AN INSTRUMENT DESIGNED FOR
SHADOWING HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

By

Jack Blendinger
Mississippi State UniversityGail Snipes
Jackson State UniversityPERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
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This paper presents an instrument for using structured observation to study the managerial behavior of a high school principal. The instrument organizes observations into five strands and can be used to shadow a principal for one day or several days. The five strands are:

- Strand A: Basic administrative functions
- Strand B: Office-related tasks
- Strand C: Managing by walking about (MBWA)
- Strand D: Scheduled and unscheduled meetings and conferences
- Strand E: Interactions and interruptions

Strand A addresses essential functions, such as student discipline, that a principal is expected to perform on the job. Strands B-D address time recorded for Strand A functions from different perspectives, such as how much time the principal spends managing by walking about. Strand E uses frequency tallies rather than time as a measure to address interactions and interruptions.

This instrument was developed specifically for distribution to interested educators through the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education's Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

The paper is co-authored by Jack Blendinger, professor of educational leadership at Mississippi State University, and Gail Snipes, assistant professor of educational foundations and leadership at Jackson State University. Dr. Blendinger can be reached via e-mail at jblendinger@colled.msstate.edu or by telephone at 662-325-7064. Dr. Snipes can be contacted via e-mail at gsnipes@ccaix.jsums.edu or by telephone at 601-979-8607.

March 2001

College of Education
Mississippi State University
Mississippi 39762

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Although high school principals are confronted with a multitude of daily responsibilities and tasks that consume their time and energy, researchers have only a vague idea about what these site-based administrators actually do or should do. The reason that little is known about what high school principals actually do is that much of the research conducted has been based on self-reported data collected through surveys. Relatively few field-based studies observing the work of high school principals in their natural settings have been done.

The instrument presented herein was developed for the purpose of assisting researchers (especially graduation students involved in action research projects) to use structured observation in studying the managerial behavior of high school principals as they carry out their daily responsibilities and tasks. To develop the instrument, we combined our personal experiences in using observational techniques, what we learned from our administrative practices, and the work of other researchers who used similar methods (Berman, 1982; Minzberg, 1973; Martin, 1980; Whethayanugoon, 1995). Most of the studies done during the past three decades that used structured observation to investigate principals were based on methods developed by Minzberg (1973), one of the first researchers to design a classification system for studying the daily behavior of managers in business and industry. His system provided a means for categorizing managerial responsibilities and tasks. Shortly after Minzberg published his seminal work, educators employed it, with minor adaptations, to study the managerial behavior of school administrators.

The instrument we developed provides the observer with specific behaviors that should be taken into account while making observations. Use of the instrument requires the observer to be in the school setting at a specified time (e.g., when the principal arrives at and leaves the school campus) for a prescribed length of time (e.g., one day or several days). A running account of behaviors as they occur is then

recorded, using a coding system, noting time and/or frequency occurrences. Three particular strengths of the instrument are: (a) data collection is not dependent on the observer being highly experienced, (b) information is recorded in relation to behaviors expected to occur, and (c) collects both quantitative and qualitative data.

The shadowing instrument consists of five strands:

- Strand A: Basic administrative functions
- Strand B: Office-related tasks
- Strand C: Managing by walking about (MBWA)
- Strand D: Scheduled and unscheduled meetings and conferences
- Strand E: Interactions and interruptions

Strand A, the instrument's dominant strand, addresses nine essential functions that a principal is expected to perform on the job. Unforeseen or unobservable functions are addressed by the term "other." The 10 functions account for the principal's total time on the job. Strands B, C, and D address time recorded for Strand A's basic functions from different perspectives. For example, Strand B addresses the time spent for the function dealing with business matters from the perspective of how much of the time recorded pertains to receiving or sending e-mail messages. Strand E does not use time as a measure. Instead, frequencies (number of times the behavior occurred) are tallied to measure the principal's interactions with others and the interruptions s/he encountered.

Strand A: Basic Administrative Functions

Basic administrative functions pertain to "practicing the proper actions for which the principal is employed to lead and manage the school." For observational purposes, it's assumed that these functions consume the high school principal's total time and effort. The 10 functions are:

1. Curriculum and instruction
2. Human resources management
3. Student discipline
4. Safety and security
5. Business management

6. School culture and climate
7. Facilities maintenance
8. Parent involvement
9. Student activities and athletics
10. Other--activities not covered in functions 1-9

A detailed description of the 10 functions follows:

1. Curriculum and instruction: activities include monitoring the curriculum (i.e., insuring that the written curriculum is the taught and tested curriculum), assessing curriculum (e.g., analyzing standardized test scores) developing and improving curriculum, assisting teachers in designing and implementing instructional units, reading books and articles related to instruction, and planning the school's course schedule or scheduling students in teachers' classes for the coming year serving as a knowledgeable resource for teachers and staff (e.g., helping teachers interpret standardized test scores), reading books and articles related to instruction, planning instructional changes, reviewing course schedules, assigning teachers to courses, and scheduling students in classes.
2. Human resources management: activities include recruiting, screening, interviewing, and hiring employees; placing, inducting, and monitoring employees; evaluating teachers and staff; developing and monitoring plans for improving employee performance; and assessing, planning, and participating in staff development.
3. Student discipline: activities include overseeing the school's code of student conduct, disciplining students who misbehave, communicating with parents for disciplinary purposes, and managing student discipline records.
4. Student/staff safety and school security: activities include overseeing the school's safety and emergency crisis plans, monitoring campus security, and insuring that the school environment is safe.
5. Business management: activities include developing and overseeing the budget, approving requisitions and purchase orders, authorizing payment of purchases, and monitoring student activity accounts.
6. School culture and climate: activities include articulating a vision about what the school should and can be, monitoring the school's mission, shaping culture by developing a sense of community, assessing school climate, participating in rituals and ceremonies, telling stories about people (students and adults) who influence the school's guiding beliefs and values, and recognizing and celebrating success.
7. Buildings and grounds maintenance: activities include monitoring the cleanliness and physical condition of classrooms, halls, restrooms, offices, common areas, gymnasium, and cafeteria; checking heating, cooling, and

- utility systems; assessing grounds and playing fields; and addressing other matters directly related to the physical condition of the campus.
8. Parent involvement: activities include communicating with parents, helping parents to assist in their children's learning at home, and encouraging parent participation at school.
 9. Student activities and athletics: activities include overseeing student government, student clubs, intramural recreation, and interscholastic athletics.
 10. Other: activities not specifically covered in functions 1-9 are identified as "other." This category includes lunch and when the principal physically leaves the campus for work-related matters (e.g., attending a meeting in the district office).

Strand B: Office-Related Tasks

Strand B of the instrument focuses on the amount of time the high school principal spends on office-related tasks, either within the boundaries of his/her personal office or the school office. Specific activities include reading and writing correspondence (letters, memoranda, e-mail, notes, reports, etc.), receiving or making telephone calls, organizing materials, and making announcements. Strand B is divided into two parts to assist the observer in making observations:

1. Office-related tasks done within the boundaries of the principal's office.
2. Office-related tasks done outside the boundaries of the principal's office, but within the general parameters of the school office.

Tasks carried out within the boundaries of the principal's office include:

- a. Reading letters, memoranda, notes, and reports, etc.
- b. Writing letters, memoranda, notes, and reports, etc.
- c. Receiving and reading e-mail
- d. Writing and sending e-mail
- e. Using the Internet
- f. Receiving telephone calls
- g. Making telephone calls
- h. Filing and organizing material
- i. Other

Tasks, most of which are similar to those done in the principal's office, carried out within the parameters of the school office include:

- a. Reading letters, memoranda, notes, and reports, etc.
- b. Writing letters, memoranda, notes, and reports, etc.
- c. Receiving and reading e-mail
- d. Writing and sending e-mail
- e. Using the Interment
- f. Receiving telephone calls
- g. Making telephone calls
- h. Filing and organizing material
- i. Making announcements over the intercom system
- j. Other

Strand B's two categories overlay the nine basic administrative functions (e.g., curriculum and instruction, human resources management, student discipline, etc.) identified in Strand A. Although the time was already accounted for in Strand A, it's counted a second time for Strand B activities. In accounting for time, the observer should be able to trace each of the tasks recorded for Strand B to one of the functions observed in Strand A.

Strand C: Managing By Walking About (MBWA)

Strand C focuses on the amount of time that the principal spends being a visible presence: venturing forth from the parameters of the office area to manage the school by walking about (MBWA) the buildings and grounds in order to observe first-hand what is happening or not happening. MBWA activities include visiting classrooms, monitoring halls, checking restrooms, supervising traffic areas (e.g., bus loading and unloading), overseeing cafeterias, wandering through the libraries, etc. The principal's major MBWA purpose is to see and be seen.

MBWA activities, like the office-related activities in Strand B, overlay the 10 basic administrative functions (e.g., curriculum and instruction, human resources management, student discipline, etc.) identified in Strand A. The time is already accounted for in Strand A, but counted again for MBWA activities. In accounting for time, the observer should be able to trace each MBWA activity recorded for Strand C to one of the functions observed in Strand A.

Strand D: Scheduled and Unscheduled Meetings and Conferences

Strand D focuses on the amount of time that the principal spends participating in scheduled and unscheduled meetings and conferences. Similar to Strand B, this strand is also divided into two categories to better assist the observer in making observations:

1. Scheduled meetings and conferences.
2. Unscheduled meetings and conferences.

In the context of the instrument, a "meeting" is defined as persons coming together to exchange information or address an issue, while a "conference" is defined as conferring with another or others to share information which may be confidential. A rule of thumb for separating a conference from a meeting is that the conference usually involves one person, such as conferring with a teacher to discuss a performance evaluation, or a family to address matters that are more personal than could be discussed at a meetings. The term "scheduled meeting or conference" refers to a meeting or conference planned in advance. The term "unscheduled meeting or conference" refers to a meeting or conference that was not planned prior to the start of the workday; that is, the meeting or conference did not appear in the principal's daily planning calendar.

Like Strands B and C, the activities for Strand D also overlay the 10 basic administrative functions (e.g., curriculum and instruction, human resources management, student discipline, etc.) identified in Strand A. Although the time is already accounted for in Strand A, its counted again giving attention to the particular amount of time the principal spends participating in meetings and conferences. In accounting for time, the observer should be able to trace each of the meeting or conferencing activities recorded for Strand D to one of the functions observed in Strand A (e.g., the principal spent 15 minutes in a conference with a teacher regarding her evaluation).

Strand E: Interactions and Interruptions

Strand E focuses on the principal's interactions with others and the number of times that others interpret his/her work. This strand differs from the previous strands because it does not use time as a measure. Interactions and interruptions are tallied as frequencies (i.e., number of occurrences is recorded).

For the purpose of the instrument, interactions are defined in terms of face-to-face encounters within the parameters of the school campus (buildings and grounds) between the principal and other adults, not students. They are measured numerically by counting the number of encounters that the principal has with other adults (e.g., teachers, custodians, parents, etc.) on the school campus throughout the course of the workday. All face-to-face encounters with other adults are counted, regardless of whether they take place in a one-on-one conference, in a group meeting involving several adults, or with a teacher during a classroom visit. Telephone conversations are not counted. Personal encounters are limited to the school campus; whatever occurs off campus is not counted.

Interruptions pertain to the number of times the principal is interrupted by others either in person or on the telephone under the following conditions:

1. Working, either within the boundaries of his/her personal office or the parameters of the school office, on office-related tasks (e.g., reading correspondence).
2. Participating in a meeting or conference in which the interrupter is not involved (i.e., interrupter enters the scene and interrupts what the principal is doing).
3. Visiting a classroom to observe teaching and learning.

Interruptions are not counted, however, if they occur while the principal is managing by walking about the building and grounds for monitoring or supervisory purposes.

Recording Field Notes

As previously mentioned, this instrument is intended be used to shadow a high school principal for one day or several days. Observations for less than a full-day are not recommended.

Lined or unlined 8" by 11" paper can be used to record field notes. In making notes, the observer should write down only what is actually seen or heard. Key behaviors, situations, and happenings are recorded as they occur. Observers should also develop their own note taking style and abbreviations (e.g., SM for a scheduled meeting).

To record field notes, divide the paper into four sections as shown in the example that follows. The first section should be approximately one inch wide and used to record the time (in minutes) that the behavior occurred. Some observed behaviors will be less that a minute, while others will consume several minutes. The second section is the widest section and used to record behaviors. The final two sections should be a half-inch wide and used to record the number of interactions that the principal has with others in the form of face-to-face encounters (Enc) and the number of times the principal is interrupted (Int) when involved in office work, participating in a meeting, or visiting a classroom.

Time	Behavior Observed	Enc	Int

After the day's observations have been completed, the field notes should be revised, carefully rewritten, and discussed, if necessary, with the principal observed in order to insure accuracy.

High School Principal Profile

The profile presented in this section provides observers with a model showing how a high school principal who is striving to be an exemplary leader and manager may be assumed to spend his/her time and effort. The profile was developed by combining our own studies mapping managerial behavior with information reported in the literature about the role of the high school principal. According to the assumptions upon which the profile is based, the effective high school principal is first a leader who creates a vision of what should be and then a manager who translates the vision into reality. MBWA helps the principal know first-hand what's going in the school. An MBWA principal is everywhere: in hallways, staff rooms, classrooms, boiler rooms, cafeterias, bus loading areas, school plays, athletic events, and concerts; does many things at once, such as talking with students, teachers, or custodians while walking down halls or visiting classrooms; promptly deal with teacher and student concerns; and is visible throughout the community. Such a principal is also a good communicator who engages in open and accurate two-way communication; listens to teachers, staff, students, and parents; speaks and writes clearly; and proficiently uses technology when feasible.

The profile assumes that the principal of a high school with an enrollment of approximately 1,000 students can be expected to spend a greater proportion of time addressing curriculum and instruction issues, managing human resources, and overseeing business matters than for other administrative functions. The reason a principal of a school this size is assumed to spend more time on teaching and learning issues is that other staff members can be expected to supervise functions such as student discipline. Managing the school's human resources--recruiting, screening, interviewing, and hiring employees; placing, inducting, and mentoring employees; evaluating teachers and staff--is assumed to take considerable time due to the number of teachers and support staff members assigned to the school. Overseeing school business matters--monitoring the budget, approving requisitions and purchase orders,

authorizing payment of purchases, and checking student activity accounts--is assumed to consume much time because the principal's responsibilities resemble those expected of a chief financial officer (CFO).

The basic administrative functions presented below show the percent of time the principal is expected to spend for each function during a typical school day:

1. Supervising Instruction	.25
2. Managing human resources	.20
3. Overseeing business	.15
4. Student discipline	.10
5. Monitoring safety and security	.05
6. Shaping school culture	.05
7. Facilities maintenance	.05
8. Involving parents	.05
9. Student activities and athletics	.05
10. Other	.05

The actual amount of time spend on any one function will, of course, vary due to the day of the week, the week of the month, or the month of the school year.

In addition to the basic administrative functions, it is assumed that 25% of the principal's time will be spent doing office-related tasks within the boundaries of his/her office and 5% of the time will be spent on tasks done within the parameters of the school office. It is further posited that the principal will make extensive use (more than 30 minutes per day on the average) of e-mail for communication purposes and the Internet to gather information.

Twenty percent of the principal's time is expected to be invested in managing by walking about the school's buildings and grounds to observe first-hand what is happening or not happening. MBWA activities include visiting classrooms, monitoring halls, checking restrooms, supervising traffic areas (e.g., bus loading and unloading), overseeing the cafeteria, or wandering through the library.

Since meetings and conferences constitute a major part of any administrator's workload, it's further posited that 30% of the principal's time will be spent participating

in scheduled meetings and conferences, while 10% will be spent participating in unscheduled meetings and conferences.

No attempt is made to qualify the principal's interactions with others or the number of times that others interpret his/her work except to point out that the principal may be assumed to interact with a large number of people and experience frequent interruptions when working at office-related tasks. In general, high school principals can be expected to engage in a great variety of work characterized by brevity and discontinuity.

As stated earlier in this section, the assumptions about the time that the principal is expected to spend on the activities for each of the four strands--basic administrative functions, office-related tasks, MBWA, and meetings and conferences--addressed in the profile apply to administering a high school with approximately 1,000 students. Principals administering high schools with less students will probably spend more time addressing student discipline and campus safety due to staff size, while principals administering high schools with more than 1,000 students may be expected to spend greater amounts of time for personnel and business matters.

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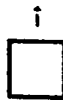
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Organization/Address: <i>Mississippi State University PO Box LH Mississippi state, MS 39762</i>	Telephone: <i>662-325-7064</i>	FAX: <i></i>
	E-Mail Address: <i>jblendinger@colled.msstate.edu</i>	Date: <i>3/29/01</i>